

The Candidacy Examination

Purpose of Candidacy Examination

The purpose of the Candidacy Examination is to demonstrate the student's ability to 1) synthesize knowledge in the student's research (substantive and methods) and cognate areas; 2) visualize the long-term development of a program of research in the defined area; and 3) place the planned Dissertation research in the context of that program of research and the area of knowledge.

Upon successfully passing the Candidacy Examination and completing all required coursework, the student is admitted to Dissertation Candidacy. The Candidacy Examination is held after completion of course work requirements as represented in the student's Plan of Study, and prior to the Defense of the Dissertation Proposal.

NOTE: Dissertation credits taken before advancement to Dissertation Candidacy will not be counted toward the 24 dissertation credit minimum required for the degree.

Procedure

- The student will identify a substantive area in which he or she is developing expertise and a brief statement of the area will be drawn up by the student.
- The Candidacy Examination will be prepared and administered by the student's Dissertation Committee consisting of a minimum of three (3) faculty members of the academic unit offering the degree plus one (1) faculty member with graduate standing from another academic unit at FIU. On consultation with the Committee Chair, a fifth member may be added.
- The oral Candidacy Examination is to be posted in the CNHS 2 weeks in advance of the Examination. The candidate's committee chair will inform the Director of the PhD Program that the committee members have reviewed the four papers and agreed that the candidate is ready for the oral defense.
- Each Candidacy Examination must be prepared by the Dissertation Committee members, coordinated by the Committee Chair. The Committee will meet without the student and will formulate a set of questions that the student is to address in the written Examination. These questions will require the student to do the following:
 - Synthesize depth and breadth knowledge in the field from a nursing perspective to summarize the current state of knowledge and to identify areas in which further research is needed, including identifying key phenomena and methodological approaches for addressing those phenomena and related research questions;
 - Describe how the student foresees developing a program of research in the content area over the five years to seven years, including:
 - Identifying the topic of the Dissertation research.

- Showing how the Dissertation will contribute to the overall content and describing its significance to knowledge development and to nursing;
 - Showing how the Dissertation will serve as the cornerstone of a program of research, describing the steps to be taken the next 5 to 7 years to build that program of research.
- The student's responses must be graded by the Committee members. Admission to Dissertation Candidacy requires that a majority of the Committee members agree that the student passed the Examination. A Candidacy Examination may not be passed conditionally. A "Pass" on the Examination cannot be made contingent upon other factors such as the completion of additional coursework or the preparation of extra research projects.
- Students are informed in writing of the results of their performance on the Examination within 30 days of the Examination date. If the student fails the Candidacy Examination the Committee, at its discretion, may provide for re-examination at a mutually satisfactory time but no more than one year from the original date of the Examination.

Passing the Candidacy Examination is requisite to continuing in the graduate program. Students who fail the Candidacy Examination twice will be dismissed from the doctoral program.

Application to Dissertation Candidacy

The Director of the PhD Program and the Dean of the University Graduate School must certify that the student has completed all required and recommended course work, has passed the Candidacy Examination, and is applying for Dissertation Candidacy. The student is responsible for completing the form and obtaining signatures. To obtain a copy of the certification form, see ***FIU Graduate Student Forms*** and then ***Form D-2 Program for Doctoral Degree and Application for Candidacy***. The form must be filed with the University Graduate School as soon as the Candidacy Examination has been passed and required coursework is completed.

Advancement to Dissertation Candidacy must be approved by the Dean of the University Graduate School. Doctoral students who have not been advanced to candidacy will not be allowed to register for Dissertation credits.

After a doctoral student is admitted to Dissertation Candidacy, continuous registration for at least 3 credit hours each semester (including the summer term) is required until the Dissertation requirement is fulfilled. Once a student's Dissertation Candidacy has been approved by the Dean of the University Graduate School, he or she is eligible to write and defend the Dissertation Proposal.